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Press Release

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**United States Attorney Announces Civil and Criminal Collections of
Approximately \$13 Million for Fiscal Year 2010**

United States Attorney James L. Santelle announced today that, in Fiscal Year 2010, the staff of the Office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin collected approximately \$13 million in a variety of criminal, civil, and related forfeiture proceedings. Of that sum, \$3,088,820.12 was recovered or collected in criminal cases, \$5,692,910.29 was recovered in civil cases, and \$4,210,416.00 was recovered in criminal and civil forfeiture proceedings. In making this announcement, Santelle noted that "this amount is several million dollars more than the total operating budget for our office during the fiscal year just concluded."

These dramatic local recoveries are a part of the nationwide financial collections of the United States Department of Justice that, for Fiscal Year 2010, reached an all-time high of approximately \$6.68 billion. Santelle commented further that "this total sum, the result of the purposeful and effective work of Justice Department employees in all 93 United States Attorneys' Offices, including ours here in Eastern Wisconsin, marks the most successful collection year ever – and more than three times the appropriated budget for all of the offices nationwide."

"During this period of gradual but identifiable economic recovery, collections of this type are hugely important," Santelle remarked. "Not only do we prosecute crimes and litigate civil claims to promote fundamental justice for the people of our district but we also hold accountable those criminal defendants and civil parties who attempt to profit from their illegal activities or fraudulent schemes. Our professional, aggressive efforts to recover monies due and owing to the United States signal our commitment to protecting the public and to restoring to the federal treasury those funds that can then be appropriately used for legitimate purposes. Significantly, that includes ensuring that victims of crime receive the restitution amounts that they are owed and that other, beneficial programs and projects are fiscally sound and operationally strong."

Through its Asset Forfeiture and Financial Litigation Unit, the Office of United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin enforces and collects on civil and criminal debts owed to the United States and criminal monetary obligations owed to victims of federal crimes. It also identifies, seizes, and forfeits physical properties and monetary amounts that are the products of criminal conduct. Santelle stated: "I am exceptionally proud of the outstanding, tireless work of each of the members of our Asset Forfeiture and Financial Litigation Unit in this past fiscal year and in previous years. Their efforts, along with the stellar performance of all of the employees of our office, illustrate that, by investing in and supporting these valuable human resources, the American people reap dividends well beyond the costs of our office operation."

Statistics for Fiscal Year 2010 released by the United States Department of Justice reflect that the amount collected by United States Attorneys' Offices nationwide in criminal actions totaled \$2.84 billion in the nature of restitution funds, criminal fines, and special assessments. The federal law requires that defendants pay restitution to victims of certain federal crimes who have suffered a physical injury or financial loss. Although those restitution amounts are paid to victims, criminal fines and special assessments are deposited into the Justice Department's Crime Victims' Fund, from which monies are allocated to state victim compensation and victim assistance programs.

In addition, United States Attorneys' Offices nationwide collected \$1.8 billion in asset forfeiture proceedings in Fiscal year 2010. These forfeited assets are deposited into either the Justice Department's Asset Forfeiture Fund or the Treasury Department's Forfeiture Fund and are used to restore monies to crime victims and for a variety of related law enforcement purposes.

As those statistics also reflect, \$3.84 billion was collected in Fiscal Year 2010 through the litigation of civil claims—the largest of which were the result of the successful prosecution of affirmative civil enforcement cases. “In those proceedings,” Santelle explained, “our Assistant United States Attorneys in the Civil Division investigate and file lawsuits to recover taxpayer monies lost to fraud or other misconduct in the areas of health care, public safety, government contracts, civil rights, and environmental matters, among others. Beyond that, our civil legal and collections staff also collects on debts due and owing to various federal agencies, including the United States Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Treasury.”

These nationwide collections totals for Fiscal Year 2010 represent a nearly 30% increase in criminal collections and a 57% increase in civil collections over the amounts recovered in Fiscal Year 2009. In addition to the focused, directed work of Justice Department employees nationwide, including those in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, the significant increase in the past year resulted from the completion of various high-dollar criminal restitution cases and several, equally large health care fraud cases.

The Justice Department's Annual Statistical Reports are found on the internet at http://www.justice.gov/usao/reading_room/foiamanuals.html. For additional information, contact Public Information Officer Dean Puschnig, Office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, at (414) 297-1774.

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